

22
A
FUNERAL SERMON

Occasion'd by the

DEATH

Of the Reverend and Learned

Mr. JOHN RUSSELL,

Late MINISTER of the GOSPEL:

Preach'd at

Newington-Green,

Nov. 28, 1714.

By JOHN NESBITT.

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N:

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By JOHN WESSBURY

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O N

Mr. John Russell.

JOB IX. 12.

Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou?

IN the Context we have an eloquent Description, and affecting Acknowledgment of the Power and Wisdom of God, in the Works of Nature, and Ways of Divine Providence. We may see enough in both to fill us with the highest Admiration, and to convince us that his Counsels transcend our Understanding. But how little a Portion is heard of him! *Which doth great things past finding out, yea,* Ver. 10. *and wonders without Number.* The Operations of second Causes fall under our Observation, but the Direction of them by the supreme Agent is to us invisible. *Lo he goeth by me, and I see him* Ver. 11. *not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.* Thus the

the Hand of the Clock is plain to our View, while the Springs of Motion are hid and concealed. And as God's Ways are past our finding out ; so they are neither to be opposed, nor disputed by us. For, as in the Words of my Text, *Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou?* Some read the Words ; *If he take one out of the World, who can hinder him?* who can turn him away ; or make him restore, what he hath taken from them ? *Who will dispute the Reason, or ask him, Why he hath done thus?*

The Doctrine which lies plain in the Words, and suits the present mournful Occasion, is this :

What ever be the Enjoyment, or Comfort that God takes from us ; he is neither to be opposed, nor questioned by us.

Job 10. 2. When Job resolved to say unto God, *Do not condemn me ; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me ;* it was to free himself from the Charge of Hypocrisy, which others had fixed upon him, and to satisfy his Conscience ; not to gratify his Curiosity, or to dispute with God the Equity of his Counsels. And the Words of *Elihu* express a Temper of Mind always very suitable under such Circumstances : *Surely it is meet to be said unto God, that which I see not, teach thou me ; if I have done Iniquity, I will do so no more.* God is to be own'd as the Benefactor, by what ever Means our Mercies are conveyed to us ; and what way soever they are taken from us, his Hand is to be acknowledged ; but his Power must not be opposed, nor his Goodness impeached.

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The Method I shall take, in treating upon this Subject, will be,

First, To shew what those things are, in the Removal of any Enjoyment or Comfort, which are most apt to disquiet and afflict the Mind : *Behold he taketh away.*

The Reason why I begin with this is, because *Bildad* had charged *Job* with imputing Injustice to God. *How long, says he, wilt thou speak these things ? Doth God pervert Judgment ? Or doth the Almighty pervert Justice ?* Chap. 8: 2, 3. Now we are apt to be affected with this evil Disease,

1. When that is taken away, which was much beloved by us. According to the Share that any Object hath in our Affection, such is our Pain and Uneasiness in parting with it. When the Child is fond of the Breast, there is usually much crying and Lamentation upon its Removal from it. We are not much moved, when deprived of that, which was little valued while enjoyed ; but when *Joseph* is not, and *Simeon* is not, and we apprehend that *Benjamin* is to go after them, 'tis difficult to bear up under such Trials. This was so hard a Saying, that the old Patriarch, tho' an experienc'd Scholar in the School of Affliction, could not receive it, without entering his Remonstrance : *All these things are against me.* And tho' *David*, as to his Crown and Kingdom, was like a weaned Child, indifferent, as it were, whether he sway'd the Sceptre, or the Shepherd's Crook ; yet when the Tydings of *Abfalom's* Death were brought him, the Strength of his Love to him, notwithstanding he was a rebellious Son, raised such a Transport of Passion, as to make him speak unadvisedly : *O my Son* 2 Sam. 18. 33.

Son Absalom ! my Son, my Son Absalom, would to God I had died for thee ! O Absalom ! my Son, my Son !

Gen. 5.
29.

2. We are very apt to repine at the Loss of that, in which we had great Confidence, and raised Expectations. When we have said of that which is taken away, as he did of his Son, *This same shall comfort us concerning our Work, and Toil of our Hands* : Or when we have looked on it as our *Isaac*, of whom God had said, *In Isaac shall thy Seed be called*, and yet commanded to offer him for a burnt Offering : then the Heart is apt to be over-whelmed. It requires a strong Faith to keep from fainting at such a season. That which is of little use may be easily parted with ; but when such are taken away, as have been to us, like the Guide to the benighted Traveller in the Desert ; or the faithful Counsellor to the distressed Client ; those who had the same common Joys and Sorrows with our selves ; who were the Light of our Eyes, the Staff of our Lives, the Hopes of our Families ; and especially when serviceable in that Work which is of everlasting Consequence to others ; the removal of these is apt to sink our Hearts.

Job 42.
12.

3. It adds greatly to our Affliction, when that is taken away, whose Room or Place can never be supplied to us. Tho' we be robbed and spoiled of all the ordinary Gifts of Providence, yet we may be recruited. *Job* was stript bare of every Thing, as in the Day he was born, and his hope of Restoration was as low as his Condition ; yet *the Lord blessed the latter end of Job, more than his beginning* : but when our Loss is irrecoverable, our Root withered, we are then apt to cry in our Complaint, *My Wound is incurable* ;

curable ; my Pain is perpetual, my Coal is quenched.

4. But what occasions the highest Aggravation to our Sorrow is, when there appears much Wrath and Displeasure in the way we are afflicted. It may contribute very much to our support, when nothing discovers it self in the Affliction but what is common to Men ; but when God comes against us with numerous, and various, and unusual Providences, this presseth us down. The Word here used for *taking away*, signifies *to do it with Violence* ; as Job describes his own Affliction, *He teareth me in his Wrath. He breaketh me with breach upon breach.* And the Psalmist, *All thy Waves and Billows are gone over me.* Here's not plurality with Succession, but Connexion ; not like the Waters in a common Channel which lessen by running, but like the meeting of two Streams which swell the Flood. Under such Trials we are ready to complain with Job : *He will not suffer me to take my Breath, but filleth me with bitterness.* In a Word, when God comes not like a Father to correct us, but an Executioner to cut us off ; when he seems to bring the *Scorpion*, not the *Whip* ; to use the *Ax* to hew us down, and not the *pruning Knife* to promote our Fruitfulness ; when such heightening Circumstances attend the removal of any Enjoyment, we are very apt to grow distempered in our Spirits. Therefore, I shall endeavour to shew,

Secondly, What is forbidden in the Interrogation of our Text : *Who can hinder him ? Who will say to him, What doest thou ?* Sometimes a Question is for Information, or to express our wonder, *How shall this be ?* At other Times it

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im- Luke 1.
34.

Job 22. 2. implies a Negation, *Can a Man be profitable to*
 —25. 4. *God? How can Man be justified with God?* And
 in this Sense 'tis to be understood here. For,
 as Man hath no *Merit* to recommend him to
 God's *Favour*, so he hath no *Strength* to grapple
 with his *Power*. What we are taught by these
 Questions, may be comprehended in the follow-
 ing Particulars.

1. To be sensible of the Loss we sustain, in
 what is taken from us, is not forbidden. When
 Job had heard his Losses, until he had no more
 Chap. 1. to lose, he rent his *Mantle*, shaved his *Head*,
 20, 22. and fell down upon the *Ground*; yet in all this Job
 sinned not. To be unconcerned for the Death of
 near and dear Relations is *stupidity*, not *submis-*
sion. Such are not capable of being Friends,
 nor do they deserve any. To pretend we are
 not disquieted when our most valuable Friends
 are taken away, or that we find no uneasiness
 in our Breasts, from the freshest Reviews of
 those pleasant Moments which were sweetened
 by conversing with them, is vain boasting; and
 if any arrive at such insensibility, it shows
 they are void both of *Religion* and *Humanity*.
 Such *calmness* is a *Curse*, and discovers the Per-
 son under the sad Symptoms of Judicial hard-
 ness. Thou hast stricken them but they have not
 Jer. 5. 3. grieved. This would be to forget the *Exhortati-*
 Heb. 12. 5. *on which speaketh unto us as Children, My Son*
despise not thou the chastening of the Lord; don't
 disregard the Operations of his Hand.

2. Whatever we feel, we must not faint, or be
 dispirited. As we must not be like the Corner-
 stone, that bears all, but feels nothing; so we
 must not be like the silly Dove without Heart.
 As we ought not to despise *Chastisement*, so nei-
 ther

ther should we faint when rebuked. It was an unjust Charge which *Eliphaz* brought against *Job*: *Thy Words have upholden him that was falling*, *Job* 4. 5. *and thou hast strengthened the feeble Knees: But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest, it toucheth thee and thou art troubled*: Thou art as a Man astonished and amazed, that knows not what he says. When we look on our Loss as irreparable, our Grief becomes unsupportable to us, and overwhelms the Soul. The Mind is not easily diverted from that which doth sensibly afflict it; and the Streams of our Musing will run to the mournful Object. And therefore they said of *Mary*, when she went out, *She goeth unto the Grave to weep there*. *John* 11. Such live to feel, and feed their own Grief; like some Stomachs, which by reason of a vicious Humour, turn what is received for *Nourishment* to promote their *Disease*. We must not therefore be like *Rachel*, weeping for her Children, and refusing to be comforted. *Are the Consolations of God small with thee?* *Job* 15. 11. Can't his Balm heal thy Wounds? Are not his Treasures sufficient to supply thy Wants? nor his Comforts to delight thy Soul? Tho' we are afflicted therefore, and the Hand of God lieth heavy upon us, yet we must not faint, or be dejected, as if there was no help for us in him.

3. We are not to deny, or question the Safety of our State, as if rejected of God, from the greatness of what we suffer. There is nothing more readily granted by all Christians than this, That *no Man knoweth either Love or Hatred by all that is before them*. *Eccles.* 9. 1. The World is a common Inn, where all Things come alike to all Men. A Man cannot conclude he is a Favourite

rite of Heaven, because he hath always lived in a prosperous Condition, or the Smiles of Providence have attended him; nor must we conclude we are rejected of God, or in a State of Condemnation, because we have seen Affliction by the Rod of his Anger, above other Men. Yet when we see all Things going against us in the Course of Providence, we are ready to say, as that mighty Man of Valour did, *If the Lord be with us, why is all this befallen us?* We cannot believe he hears our *Prayers*, when he multiplies our *Troubles*. *If I had called*, says Job, *and he had answered me, yet would I not believe he had hearkened to my Voice; for he breaketh me with a Tempest, and multiplieth my Wounds.* But since there is no Reason for this Temper of Mind, let us not conclude we have no share in God's *Affliction*, whatever bitter Things he writes against us in his *afflictive Dispensations*; nor disinherit our selves as Heirs of the *Promises*, because we cannot read, or understand the dark Characters of his *Providence*.

4. We must not contend or dispute with God, by secret Murmurings or Resentments, at any of his Dispensations he is pleas'd to try us with. Few will dare directly to speak against God, or contend with the Almighty; yet even holy *David*, when under great Affliction, said, in his amazement, or consternation, *All Men are Lyars*; not only *Saul* and his Courtiers, but even *Samuel*, who had, in the Name of the Lord, promised him the Kingdom. Moreover, the Heart is often heated within, when there is nothing express'd outwardly. Swarms of disquieting and tormenting Thoughts are apt to raise an intestine War and Confusion in our Bosom.

som. *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? Why art thou like an Army put into Confusion, every Thought against its Fellow, as in the Day of Midian? Or like a troubled Sea, casting forth its Mire and Dirt, and fretting against the Lord? Nay, and we find, that a good Prophet, when in the height of Distress, could be angry and disquieted with God himself. And even Job, otherwise so celebrated for his Patience, ventured to say in the Bitterness of his Soul, He multiplieth my Wounds without Cause.* We cannot without Violence to the plain Sense of the Words, but own that his Anguish within made him speak unadvisedly with his Lips, in charging God's Justice, as if he laid on him more than was meet. Since the best of Men therefore have been liable to this failing, we ought to have the greater Guard upon our selves from their Examples. For the Life and Strength of Resignation consists in keeping the Affections in a composed Temper, or spiritual Calm, whatever be the Rod of Discipline that lies upon us; so as neither to be stormy nor stupid, but sensible, it is of the Lord's Mercy we are not consumed; and to own with holy Ezra, That our God hath punished us less than our Iniquities deserve.

5. We ought to adhere to God in a way of Duty, whatever Distress we are under, by reason of what he hath taken from us. It was a rash Censure that Eliphaz past on Job: *Thou castest off Fear, and restrainest Prayer.* Yet sharp and surprising Strokes of Providence are apt to affect the Heart with such Heaviness, as disables us with Freedom to wait on God, and keep his Ways. When Christ had told his Disciples of his

his approaching Sufferings, it so filled their Hearts with Sorrow, that they could neither watch nor pray when the Hour was come. The Heart under Affliction is like a broken, or disjointed Limb, not only useless, but painful. We need renewed Assistance by the Spirit of Grace, to raise our Spirits to God in the Duties of our general and particular Calling, when he is taking our most valuable Comforts from us. And happy is it for us, when with Job, in the Triumphs of Faith, we can say, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him : Yea though I go forward, but he is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive him : He knoweth the way that I take : my Foot hath held his Steps, his Way have I kept, and not declined : Or if we can come to this Resolution with him, All the Days of my appointed Time will I wait till my Change come : With quiet Submission and patient Expectation I will pursue my Duty toward him, though he breaketh me with Breach upon Breach, and runneth upon me like a Giant. This is what is most remote from charging God foolishly, or saying to him, What dost thou ?*

Job 13. 15.
 Chap. 23.
 8, &c.
 Chap. 14.
 14.

Thirdly, I shall offer some Reasons why we ought not to oppose or dispute with God, whatever be the Comforts he hath taken from us.

1. Because he is the supreme Proprietor of us and ours. What we are he made us, and all we have are his Benefits. *What hast thou, that thou didst not receive ?* He made us a little lower than the *Angels*, and when we had brought ourselves almost to a Level with *Devils*, he restored us by the *precious Blood of Christ* ; so that we are more his, than our own. His Right is original, and unalienable ; and as all the Propriety we

we have in Children, Relations, and most useful Ministers, or others, is derived from his Favour; so how long we shall enjoy them, depends upon his Pleasure: We have the Use, but the Right is his. And may he not recall his own when he pleaseth? There is one Gift of God which shall never be revoked, and that is Christ, with all his Fulness of spiritual Blessedness; but for all outward Comforts, they are but lent us. Now if he is supreme, as there is unquestionably due a free, full, and constant Obedience to all his Precepts; so a hearty Resignation to the Appointments of his Providence. What he gives should raise affectionate Thankfulness, and when he takes away, he can do us no wrong, because he demands but his own; and therefore we ought not to accuse God, or dispute with him. While *Job* regarded God's Sovereignty in what he gave, and took from him, he possessed his Soul in Patience. *Job* 1. 21. And when aged *Eli* heard the terrible Message concerning his Family, this stopt all impatient Murmuring: *It is the Lord.* And the same Consideration kept holy *David*, when under the Chastisement of Providence, from all Complaints against God. *I was dumb,* says he, *I open'd not my Mouth, because thou didst it.* *Psal.* 39. 9.

2. We ought cheerfully to acquiesce in all God's Dealings with us, because to complain of God, or reproach his Providence, is dangerous Folly. Can the Mountains of Brass be removed? No more can his Purposes be alter'd. How great Folly is it then for us to oppose them? *He is in one Mind, and who can turn him? What his Soul desireth, even that he doeth.* *Those who fall down*

down at his Feet, or humble themselves before him, he will lay in his Bosom. Relenting *Ephraim* was a dear Son; but *with the froward*, says *David*, *thou wilt shew thy self froward*. What can the swelling Waves gain by dashing against the Rock, but Destruction? or what can proud Dust and Ashes expect by flying in the Face of that God, who will overcome when he judgeth? *When there is Wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his Stroke*. Great Guilt hath been contracted by questioning of God. *Moses* and *Aaron*, for not suitably complying with his Commission, were excluded the Earthly *Canaan*. Why then should we strive against him? *for he giveth not Account of any of his Matters*. As we cannot be a Match for his Power, so we cannot penetrate into the Reasons of his Counsels; nor must we make our own Ignorance an Objection, to cavil against his Providence. For his Way is in the Sea, and his Path in the Deep, and his Footsteps are not known, nor will he bear to be arraigned at the Bar of his Creatures. *Wo to him that striveth with his Maker*.

Psal. 18. 16.
Job 36. 18.
Job 33. 13.
Isa. 45. 9.

3. God never takes away any Comfort, but with the highest Reason, and truest Affection to his own Children. When *Clouds* and *Darkness* are round about him, or the Ways of his Providence to us are like the involved and cross Circles in a Sphere; yet *Justice* and *Judgment* are the *Habitation of his Throne*; and when we can see nothing but Wrath and Indignation, *Mercy* and *Truth* go before his Face. This should silence, yea, satisfy us, whatever we suffer from him; that he is the Rock, his Work is perfect, and all his Ways are Judgment. For an ignorant Passenger to think the Gardener, when cutting and pruning

Deut. 32. 4.

ning his Vine, is destroying it, 'tis no wonder ; so for stupid Sinners to esteem a Person hated of God, or to judge as the *Barbarians* did of the *Apostle*, when the Viper fixed on his Hand, Acts 28. 4. because sharp and heavy Crosses are upon them, 'tis not to be admir'd at : but for an experienced *Patriarch* to conclude all was against him in the Course of Providence, when in that way God was bringing about his Promise to *Abraham* ; this, I say, is to be lamented, and yet 'tis too common with God's own Covenant People. Tho' the Herb, or Weed, as it grows in the Ground, be of a poisonous Nature ; yet by the Skill of the Artift, it may be so mixed and managed, as to prove an excellent Medicine. *We* Rom. 8. 28. *know that all things work together for good to them that love God.* If they are taken apart, or in themselves, they may be against us ; but in their Connexion, and with God's working in and by them, they shall be for the Advantage of all that love him. His Affection for them, his Covenant with them, and the Experience of all his Children confirms this. If all he lays upon us be as a Father, we are by that assured, it can never be designed for our Ruin, but Recovery ; it shall never be to Excess, but in Measure ; and that the Fruit of all is to destroy Sin, Heb. 12. 9, 10, 11. and make the Soul meet for the promised Kingdom. Surely then this demands intire Submission to all the Measures of Divine Providence ; for though what God designs we know not now, yet we shall know hereafter, that all was with the highest Reason and truest Love to his Children.

4. To strive with God, or dispute his Providence, opens a Door to much Sin ; whereas to

submit, and resign to his Will, is our highest Perfection. When the Heart is faint or fretting, we are not only listless for Service, like a disjointed Member in the Body, but it clouds all our former Experience. And as *Patience* by Experience begets *Hope*, so *Discontent* begets *Despair*, and reflects on God great Dishonour. Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be gracious no more? Is his *Mercy* clean gone, and doth his *Promise* fail for evermore? These are the disingenuous Reasonings of a disquieted and overwhelmed Spirit. This is the Infirmary of the Saints sometimes in the Darknes of their Sufferings. But to what a height of Perfection have those attained, where a calm and entire Submission is maintained in the Furnace of Affliction?

Jam. 1. 4. Let Patience have her perfect Work; that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. Some have queried, Whether the Strength of Grace is more seen in resisting Temptations to Sin, when attended with all the Allurements and Attractives of a carnal Appetite; or in patiently bearing the sharpest Sufferings? As, whether *Joseph*, in maintaining his Chastity, when tempted to Adultery, and that by a Superiour, and when Secrecy, Youth, and repeated Solicitations, all combin'd together to enforce the Temptation; or *Job*, who, when stript of every thing, cast from the highest Honour to the Dunghill, his Body overspread with Diseases, those who should have been his Comforters becoming his Accusers, and the Wife of his Bosom pressing him to Rebellion against Heaven, yet in all this possessed his Soul in Patience: whether, I say, of these two, gave the higher Demonstration of Integrity, and a divine Temper of Mind? But

I think it may be granted, that the patient Sufferer was the more valiant Souldier, and brighter Conqueror. Our blessed Redeemer brought more Glory to God in the Agonies of his Passion, than by all the Miracles and Ministry of his Life. In his dying he conquer'd Principalities and Powers, there he disarm'd Death of its Sting, destroy'd him who had the Power of it, and rescu'd us from the Power of the Grave. It was then he finished Sin, made an end of Transgression, and brought in an everlasting Righteousness, every way commensurate to the Law, and satisfactory to divine Justice. Nor are the Saints ever more to the Praise of his Grace, than when they glorify him under the severest Trials, by a patient and silent Submission to his Will in what they suffer. We are therefore obliged both by Duty and Interest not to repine, or be discontented at God's Proceedings, what ever Enjoyment he takes from us.

The *Fourth* and last thing is the Use or Application. And what Use so proper, as to offer some Counsel and Directions, how to bear such a Providence, as was the mournful Occasion of this Discourse? But that such Directions may appear the more necessary, I shall endeavour to give some brief Account of that excellent Person, whose Death we so justly lament. When an old harden'd Sinner is removed, the Earth may be glad, because it is eased of a Burthen under which it groaned. And when an aged Saint is by Death translated, there is Matter of Thankfulness, that after being crowned with gray Hairs in the Way of Righteousness, and by Divine Grace enabled to fight

the good Fight, to keep the Faith, and continue faithful unto Death, he is at length gone to receive the Crown of Righteousness. But when a young Saint is taken from us, before he is arrived at the Noon of Life, one who might have been an Instrument of much Glory to God for many Years, this calls for Sighs and Tears. And more especially, when a Minister of God's Word, one eminently qualified for publick Service, and every way *prepared for the Master's Use*, is suddenly snatch'd away in the Bloom of Youth; such a Loss, I say, if we either love our Redeemer, our selves, or the Souls of others, can't but affect us with the most acute Sorrow, and makes the Prophet's Wish warrantable, *Oh that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears.*

Jer. 9. 1.

I am not afraid of exceeding, in what I shall say of our deceased Friend; but may rather be apprehensive, least what time allows me to speak, should be thought too little, by those who were best acquainted with his Worth. Nor can I be charged with speaking only by Hearsay, because I have known and observed him from a Child.

The first thing observable in him, was his early Piety, which laid the Foundation of future Hopes. Grace and Nature seem'd to have begun in him together. Tho' he was left a fatherless Orphan, when but a Year old, yet the Father of Mercy was pleased to comfort the disconsolate Mother, in appearing by his Grace in him betimes. He remembered his Creator in the Morning of his Life, even before he arrived at those Years, which are called *the Days of Youth*. From a Child he delighted in reading,
and

and enquiring the Meaning of what he read, in the Word of God. His Love to secret Prayer was very remarkable, and usually after he had been hearing God's Word preached, he would retire and pray over it. When being about Ten Years old, he had heard of some Contentions among some good Men, going into his Closet, his observing Mother heard him bewailing those Divisions in these Words; *Lord, if there be so much Filth in the Gold, what is there in the Dross?* So early did the Divine Spirit of Love and Meekness breath in his Soul, which appeared in every part of his Life, and Practice afterwards.

His Inclination for Learning was strong, and his Industry great, joined with an equal Capacity to receive what was taught him; but above all, his Love to Religion, and the Professors of it, grew and encreased. Nor could offered Advantages draw him to seek his Education, where he must have been obliged to forsake those, among whom he had experienced so much of God. When he heard his Mother much urged to send him to *Oxford*, with the Offer of a considerable Exhibition, and Preferment afterwards, as he should become capable of it; he made this Remark upon what was offered, that, *The Gentleman should have first proved that Communion, to which he wou'd have persuaded him, was the purest Church, and not have insisted only on its Preferments, as the Reason for being of it.*

He counted the Cost of adhering to those of the same Principles, in which he was educated, betimes, and as he came of Age, he joined him-

himself in Fellowship with them; where his humble, and peaceable Behaviour, for near Ten Years past, hath been to the Praise of that Grace which is now perfected in Glory. He was ripe for Heaven at the Age of Thirty Two Years; when, alas! it is like to be a late Harvest with many of us, who are much his Seniors in Age.

His Attainments in Learning were not only equal, but even superiour to the Expectations, which his early Disposition for it, and constant Application, had justly raised. And as a thorough Acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures is of the highest Importance, and greatest Advantage, especially to a Minister, whose Province it is to deliver the Mind of God contained in them to others; he took care to render them very familiar to him in the Original Languages, wherein they were first written. And that he might omit nothing, which might contribute to a further Knowledge of the Divine Oracles, by the force of an extraordinary Genius, and indefatigable Industry, he acquired such an accurate Skill in all the Oriental Tongues, and that before he was Twenty Years of Age, as made him very much admired by the most capable Judges, who were themselves best acquainted with them. With the same View, he join'd to all these the Knowledge of the more valuable modern Languages, together with such other Parts of polite Literature, as might render him more useful and acceptable in his Station. And indeed to whatever Part of Learning he turned his Studies, that may be said of him, which the Apostle *Paul* said of himself, while at the Feet

Feet of *Gamaliel*, that he profited above many his *Gal. 1. 14.*
Equals in Years ; so that he enter'd upon the
Work of the Ministry as a Scribe thoroughly in- *Mat. 13.*
structed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, able to bring 52.
forth out of his Treasure Things New and Old. And
with this large Stock of Learning, he had the
Happiness of a clear Judgment, a lively Fancy,
a tenacious Memory, with an agreeable Elocu-
tion, and all these adorned by real Grace ; a
Felicity seldom to be met with in any one
Person.

And tho' his Knowledge was so great and ex-
tensive, yet it did not puff him up ; but as far
as he was above others in Learning, he was be-
low most in Humility. Some Men know much,
but they know it too much ; but *he was meek*
and lowly, like his Master. In his various Re-
lations, either Natural, or Providential, there
appear'd every Thing commendable and praise-
worthy ; for he was a dutiful Son, an affection-
ate Husband, a tender Father, a loving Bro-
ther, a sympathising Friend, Courteous and
Affable to all that knew him. His Sermons
were express'd in lively Characters in his Con-
versation ; through the whole Course whereof
he was an Example to all, *in Word, in Charity,*
in Spirit, Faith and Purity. While he continu-
ed in the more private Capacity of a Tutor to
that *young Gentleman*, whose excellent natural
Parts, love for Learning, and Condition in the
World, all conspire to give a most agreeable
Prospect of his being eminently serviceable for
his God, and his Country, in the Sphere where
Providence may place him ; in that Relation
he was deservedly acceptable to every one in
that

that *honourable Family*, where his Memory will be always precious.

In his Preaching, his *Doctrine* was *Truth according to Godliness*. He was far from any vile and sordid Views of prostituting Preaching to his Profit, or to acquire any secular Advantage. And tho' Temptations were not wanting to draw him from the Interest he had espoused; yet he had too great a Zeal and Affection for *the Truth as it is in Jesus*, to desert those whom he thought the sincere Lovers, and faithful Assertors of it, tho' under many Discouragements, to embody with those, many of whom give too great Evidence of their Enmity to the Power of Godliness. Nor did he feed his Hearers with intricate Disputes, impertinent Subtleties, or useless Niceties; but with the Bread of Life, and those Truths which have the most inseparable Connexion with eternal Life and Happiness.

You of this Congregation have evidenc'd your selves both judicious Persons, and discerning Christians, in that unanimous Choice you made of him for your Minister. But, Oh! frail, frail Life of Man! One possess'd with so much Grace and Learning, adorn'd with so great Modesty, Humility, and Candor, is so suddenly taken from us, before we had scarce time to know his Worth! The Death of so valuable a Person is not only a loss to his Family, to all his Relations, to his intimate Friends, and Acquaintance, who enjoy'd his Conversation with Pleasure, and now can't but reflect upon the want of it with Sorrow, and to this Congregation in particular; but even to the Churches of Christ, and World in general. But

But that our Grief may not make too deep an Impression upon us, we ought to consider *'tis the Lord's doing*; and that according to my Text, *He taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou?* Let us therefore rather pray the Lord of the Harvest, that he will qualify, and send forth many such Labourers into his Churches; for the residue of the Spirit is with him. O that all of us surviving Ministers, especially those who are young, may be awakened to a more serious, and diligent Perseverance in that Work, wherein we are engag'd! It was with a prospect of being more useful in his Master's Service, that our deceas'd Brother desired, with Submission, to have had his Life continued; but having finish'd the Work unto which he was appointed, and in which he so much delighted, he calmly, and freely surrender'd to the Summons of his Lord, leaving us to bewail our Loss, while he is gone to enjoy those Rivers of everlasting Pleasures. May this, I say, awaken all of us who are employed in the same Work, to be more laborious for the good of Souls; that whenever our Lord shall call us, we may hear that joyful Sentence, *Well done good and faithful Servant*. And may it likewise excite Hearers to make better Improvement of the Prize put into their Hands, that whatever be the Discouragements which attend young Ministers from the Men of this World, they may never complain of Sights or Wounds receiv'd in the House of their Friends. But let such much rather give their Preachers a share in their Prayers, that when God removes the aged and gray-headed, a double Portion of their Spirit

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may rest on those who are to succeed them, to support the Interest of Christ in this part of the World.

By this Account of the Loss we sustain in him who is taken from us, 'twill now appear how needful 'tis to assist those who are concerned in this, or such like Afflictions, with some Counsel and Directions for their support. I know 'tis more easy to give Advice to others, than to practice it our selves. They who stand on the shore will readily direct those who are in the Storm, how they shou'd steer their Course; but are soon at a loss, when it comes to be their own Case. However, as to him who is in Affliction Pity shou'd be shown; so to those who are overwhelm'd with Sorrow some Advice may be given, which may help to support them under it.

The Directions I shall at present offer, are these following.

1. Often call to remembrance what Christ endured, and that thro' his Sufferings ours are sanctified. Behold his sinless Soul surrounded with Grief! His Sorrows, Anxiety, and Agonies were so great, that Tears were not sufficient Evidences of what he suffered; nor could the Sorrows of his Heart be vented at his Eyes, but the innumerable Pores of his Body must speak the anguish of his Spirit. But there are two Things especially to be consider'd in all he suffered: One is, that he was not dispirited, but maintain'd his Trust in God. *Father, says he, if it be possible let this Cup pass from me: Thou art my Father tho' I thus suffer. And in his darkest Desertion he pleads his Relation to God; My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? Nay, when in*
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the very Jaws of Death, he speaks with full Assurance of his Exaltation: *Thou wilt shew me the* Psal. 16.
Path of Life. The other Thing to be consider- 10, 11.
 ed in Christ's Sufferings is, as was said before, that by them ours are sanctified to us, if we are his Members. He hath born the Curse, and taken away the Sting of our Afflictions. It is only *if need be*, that we *are in Heaviness*; and it is always in faithfulness, and with designs of Love that he lays the Rod upon us. As the brazen Serpent had the shape of a poisonous one, but not the Venom; so, altho' the Crosses of the Righteous are the same to Sense and Feeling with those of the ungodly, yet they are free from that Wrath and Curse which are the bitter Ingredients in the Cup of Sinners. And, as *Moses*, by casting in the Tree, sweetned the Waters of *Marah*; so by often viewing the Cross, or Sufferings of Christ, ours lose their bitterness, and we are both encouraged and enabled to trust in God.

2. Consider, *in the Day of Adversity*, what you have by Sin deserved. A serious Examination of our Hearts and Lives wou'd soon convince us, that our Sufferings are infinitely below the desert of our Sins. Shall *a living Man com-* Lam. 3.
plain? As the opening a Vein, in some other Part 39.
 of the Body, doth often stop a Flux of Blood by Revulsion; so the turning the Stream of our Sorrows, from our Sufferings to our Sins, is the way to abate the Tide of our Grievs. For when we consider that we are guilty Sinners, wretched Creatures, and worthless Rebels, 'twill melt our Hearts into godly Sorrow and Shame for our Sins. And blessed are they who thus mourn,

for they are the Objects of God's most tender Compassion. In thus sorrowing for Sin there is Light in Darkness, Health in Bitterness, Joy in Sadness, and a way is made for Divine Comforts. A relenting and mourning *Ephraim* is treated as a *dear Son* ; and the great Comforter loves to visit such Mourners.

3. Whatever we have or enjoy, let us look upon it, as that which will be removed. Tho' we are not to fill our Hearts with tormenting Feats and perplexing Apprehensions of future
 Isa. 51.12. Dangers, like those who *feared continually every Day, because of the fury of the Oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy* ; yet by saying in our Prosperity with *Job*, *I shall die in my Nest*, or like *David*, *I shall never be moved*, and so forgetting the fading Nature of all earthly Delights, we lay our selves open to the greatest Anxiety, when Providence parts us and our Comforts. Therefore while we have them, we should enjoy them, as if we enjoy'd them not ; rejoyce in them, as if we rejoyc'd not ; and thus behaving our selves as a Child, that is weaned of its Mother, when they are taken from us, we shall weep, as if we wept not. Consider that *all Flesh is Grass, and the goodliness thereof is as the Flower of the Field* ; that which is now the delight of our Hearts, the Joy of our Eyes, the Glory of our Families, may soon become our greatest Grief ; those Mercies which have yielded the sweetest Satisfaction in the Enjoyment, give us the greatest Pain at parting. 'Tis therefore our Wisdom often to consider, while we possess them, that there must certainly, and may be suddenly, a Separation between us and them.

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4. Be much in Prayer by Faith, in the Name of your Redeemer. *Is any afflicted? let him pray; Jam. 5.* for God will regard the Prayer of the Destitute. ^{13.}

By this we disburden our oppressed Spirits, and by pouring out our Hearts before him, we take the ready way to experience our heavenly Father's Compassion. 'Tis our Saviour's Promise, *Whatsoever you ask, in his Name, believing, you shall receive.* As Faith is always limited by God's Word, so it can importunately plead for the Performance of what is promised. Ask Wisdom therefore, that you may know how to walk in the Furnace of Affliction; lest while you act the part of affectionate Friends, you forget the Duty you owe to your Redeemer, as Christians. Pray that *Patience may have its perfect Work*, that you may not faint under the Hand of God; yea beg an Increase of Faith, that you may see beyond your present Clouds, to that everlasting Harbour of Rest, from whence you shall never put out to Sea any more. And humbly beg his special Presence, who hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee **. Heb. 13.

5. If you would maintain a suitable Frame of Spirit under Affliction, live on God in Christ as your Portion. We are apt to depend on Creature Comforts, and as all things on Earth are perishing, and will fail us when we most need 'em, we are shocked at the Disappointment; like the Troops of *Tema*, who were confounded, be- Job 6. 20.

* Οὐ μὴ σε ἀνῶ, ἔδ' εἰ μὴ σε ἐγκαταλίπω. *The Negatives in the Greek are multiplied, by which, according to the Idiom of that Language, the Denial is strengthened, and the promised Good the more confirmed.*

cause they had hoped: they came thither, and were ashamed. But they that trust in him shall never be confounded; for when all Creature Comforts are gone, their Portion is yet remaining. He is a suitable, sufficient, and satisfying Portion; every way suited to our immortal Spirit, sufficient to supply all its Wants, and to satisfy all its Desires, without any Diminution to his Treasures. Whatever be our Condition, we may by Faith either ascend to Heaven, or our God knows how to send down Heaven into us. In

Psal. 94.
19.

Psal. 142.
5.

Psal 73.
25, 26.

the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul, says the Psalmist. Say then with the same royal Prophet, Thou art my Portion, O Lord, in the Land of the Living: Or rather, Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth I desire besides thee: My Flesh and Heart faileth, but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.

6. In the last place, Often call to Remembrance both the Goodness, and Greatness of God: his Goodness, to support your Trust and Confidence in him; his Greatness, to maintain a becoming Awe and Reverence, lest your Hearts should murmur or repine at his Dispensations: the one is a Ground for the Anchor of Hope, the other a proper Remedy against Pride. Look not therefore only on that which is awful in him, but likewise on that which is amiable. Hath he not given us more and greater Mercies, than he can take from us? Hath he not given his own Son, the Price of our Redemption, and in him blest us with all spiritual Blessings? What is it then he can take from us, which can be compar'd, or laid in the Ballance, with this unspeakable

able Gift of *Christ Jesus*? And further, consider the many other Mercies, which together with him, he hath freely given us; but then reflect also upon his glorious Greatness, that when tumultuous Thoughts raise a Storm in your Bosom, this may reduce them to a Calm. From this you may argue, *Shall not his Excellency make me afraid?* Doth the generous Lion spare the prostrate Prey, but tear the opposing Adversary; and shall not the Dread of the Divine Majesty fall upon me? Or, shall I enter the Lists with the Almighty? When Paul saw Christ in his Glory, whom he ignorantly opposed, *trembling and astonished, he said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And the way that God took to cure Job of all his passionate Complaints, and to reduce him to a silent Submission, was not by heightening his impatient Expressions, but by a bright Discovery of his awful and glorious Majesty. Then he cries out, *Behold I am vile,* Job. 40. *what shall I answer thee? I will lay my Hand upon my Mouth. Now mine Eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in Dust and Ashes.* Chap. 42. 5. Wherefore as God's Mercy and Goodness prevents us from sinking under our Sorrows; so his glorious Greatness will guard our Spirits from contending with him, when we consider, *He taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What dost thou?*

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